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The Infixes la, li, lo in Tagalog.—By LOUIS B. WOLFENSON,
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IN the Philippine languages most derivative words are formed by means of the various kinds of reduplication,¹ and by combination with derivative particles. The derivative particles are very numerous—so numerous in fact that these languages are sometimes spoken of as “particular” languages. They are for the most part prefixes, but there are some few suffixes and infixes.

In Tagalog the only recognized infixes are *um* and *in*, *um* forming active verbs, e. g., from the root *sulat* ‘write,’ *s-um-ulat* ‘to write,’ and *in* forming the preterite and present of passive verbs, e. g., *s-in-ulat* ‘written,’ from the same root.

In Bisayan, in addition to the verbal particles *um* and *in*, employed as in Tagalog, we find the infixes *la*, *li*, *lo* inserted after the first syllable of words or roots, the vowel of the particle being in many cases the same as that in the first syllable of the root, e. g., *salawayon*, ‘that which merits correction, reprehension,’ from the root *saway* ‘correct, reprehend;’ *tilimanan* ‘mark, sign, signal’ from *timaon*, meaning the same; and *tolonan* ‘a lesson to be learned, read or memorized,’ from the root *toon* ‘teach and learn, instruct.’

These particles are used in the following manner. In the Cebuan dialect² they seem to form adjectives and frequentatives, as indicated by the statements in the grammar and dictionary.

In the grammar of the Cebuan dialect written by the Recolet Friar Zueco,³ the statement is made⁴ that adjectives of quality, signifying an accidental property of a person or thing to which they are applied, are formed by inserting these particles, e. g.,

¹ For the various forms of reduplication in Tagalog see W. G. Seiple, *Polysyllabic Roots with Initial P in Tagalog*, JAOS. vol. xxv, 1904, pp. 287, 288.

² The Cebuan dialect is one of the four principal Bisayan dialects, viz., Cebuan, Hiliguayna, Harayan, and Samaro-Leytean. Cf. Dr. Frank R. Blake’s paper, *The Bisayan Dialects*, JAOS. vol. xxvi, 1905, p. 120 ff., especially p. 123 below.

³ *Método del Dr. Ollendorff . . . adaptado al bisaya*, Manila, 1871.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 146 below.

talamayon 'despicable,' *silingbahon* 'venerable; adorable,' and *tulumanon* 'that which is practicable.' In Encarnacion's Bisayan Dictionary,¹ *li* and *lo* are defined as particles which are infixed after the first syllable to form frequentatives. A frequentative meaning, however, is often not very apparent, the derivative with infixed particle having at times a meaning very close to or practically the same as that of the word from which it is derived, as in the case of *tilimanon* 'mark, sign,' which has the same meaning as the underived word *timaon*.

In partially reduplicated roots with these particles infixed after the first syllable, a diminutive force is clearly evident, not only in the Cebuan dialect, e. g., in *tolotigolong* 'living being somewhat old, approaching old age, oldish,' from *tigolong* 'old of both sexes,' but also in the dialect of Samar and Leyte, the Samaro-Leytean, in which these particles appear as *ra*, *ri*, *ro*,² e. g., *karokabayo* 'little horse,' from *kabayo* 'horse,' and *barobalay* 'little house,' from *balay* 'house.'

The diminutive force in these cases may be due to the reduplication of the root; for in both Tagalog and Bisayan there are instances of diminutive reproduction, e. g., Tagalog *mabuti-búti* 'pretty good,' and Bisayan *tawo-tawo* 'little man.' But it is perhaps more likely that the diminutive force is due to the combination of the partial reduplication and the infixed particle.

The infixes *la*, *li*, *lo* are found not only in Bisayan, but occur also in Tagalog in a considerable number of words, although they are not recognized as such by the Spanish grammarians, e. g., *salaysáy*³ 'explain' from the root *saysáy* 'explain, clear up,' with infixed *la*; *bulitiktik* 'be very full,' from *butiktik* 'be replete with,' with infixed *la*; and *dalotdót*⁴ 'dig a little,' which is probably derived from *dotdót* 'stir with the finger,' with infixed *lo*.

The force of these particles in Tagalog is for the most part very indistinct, the meaning of the derivative with infixed particle being often the same as that of the word or root from which it is formed, as in the case of the first two examples cited

¹ *Diccionario bisaya-español y Diccionario español-bisaya*, 3^a ed. Manila, 1885, pp. 199^b, 211^a.

² On the correspondence of *l* in the Cebuan and Hiliguayna dialects with *r* in the Samaro-Leytean, see Dr. Blake's paper, cited above, p. 125.

³ The definitions of Tagalog words in this article are based on Noceda, *Vocabulario de la Lengua Tagala*, Reimpreso en Manila, 1860.

For the *a* in the first syllable cf. p. 145.

above. There are, however, some traces of a diminutive force as in *dalotdót* 'dig a little,' and in *giligintó* 'the (little) golden eyes that form on soup,' properly 'the little golden ones,' or 'the goldish ones' from *gintó* 'gold,' which must be compared with the Bisayan formations like *tolotigolong* 'oldish' and *karokabayo* 'little horse,' etc., mentioned above.

In a number of cases *la*, *li*, *lo* are infixes in a simple dissyllabic root, no definite modification in meaning being apparent, e. g. :

alakóm 'take, seize as much as the fist will hold,' from the root *ákom* 'hold in the hands, contain in the hands,' with infixes *la*.

balokí 'double a point in sailing.' Cf. *báki* 'say something to get from another what one desires' (cf. our "get around" a person), and *bóki* 'speak in a round-about fashion.' The original idea at the base of all these words was probably 'go around, get around,' with infixes *lo*.

halálang 'place something in the way in order that people may not pass through,' from *háláng* 'some obstacle placed in the way,' with infixes *la*.

salágip meaning the same as and formed from *sagíp* 'seize, take something which is in the water; adopt the manner of another; hold as a hostage,' with infixes *la*.

talósok (Supplement') 'be wedged in or stuck fast in the mud (of the leg, or *tikin* [governing pole of a skiff])' from *tások* 'a wedge, or peg,' with infixes *lo*.

In *giligintó* 'the golden eyes on soup' from the root *gintó*, we have an example of the same formation as the Bisayan forms with *la*, *li*, *lo* inserted after the first syllable of roots with initial partial reduplication having a diminutive meaning, e. g., *tolotigolong* 'oldish,' from *tigolong* 'old.'

The particles *la*, *li*, *lo* in Tagalog are inserted in a number of cases in roots consisting of two identical syllables, a diminutive force being sometimes apparent, e. g. :

balakbák 'a kind of timber or bark of a tree,' from the root *bakbák* 'strip the bark from trees, peel fruit,' with infixes *la*.

dalayráy 'place things in order in such a way that one shall not be above the other' from the root *dayráy* 'row, file of things,' with infixes *la*.

¹ Supplement.—Noceda, *op. cit.*, pp. 363-417.

salaksák (Supplement') 'cram, ram with a rod, piston, or other instrument,' derived from *saksák*, which has the same meaning.

salaysáy 'explain,' from the root *saysáy* 'explain, clear up; place material things in order,' with infixed *la*.

salayósay 'blow gently (of the wind),' from the root *sayósay* with the same meaning, with infixed *la*.

In some cases in which the vowels of the root are *o* or *i*, the first vowel of the derived word or root with infixed particle seems to be changed to *a*. But this *a* may be simply the representation of the indistinct vowel in an unaccented syllable. Thus we find:

dalogdóg 'beat the kettle-drum,' probably from the root *dogdóg* 'grind, pound,' with infixed *lo* and *a* instead of *o* in the first syllable.

dalotdót 'dig a little,' vide *dotdót* 'stir with the finger,' with infixed *lo*.

waligwíg 'shake itself (an animal), shake powder, water, etc., with infixed *li*. Cf. *wagwág* 'shake a thing to find out what is in it,' and *wigwíg* 'shake, wander; speak in circumlocutions.' Since both *wagwág* and *wigwíg* occur, *waligwíg* may represent a combination of the two, the *a* in the first syllable being derived from *wagwág* and the final *i* from *wigwíg*. Similarly

waliswís 'toss, sweep the trees with force (of the wind),' with infixed *li*, may be due to a combination of *waswás* 'shake from side to side,' and a hypothetical **wiswís*.

These formations with infixed *la, li, lo* have the appearance of the rather numerous class of roots with peculiar final reduplication, the last syllable consisting of the first consonant of the root and the vowel and final consonant of the second syllable, e. g., *payid-píd* 'approach gently (of the wind),' probably from the root *payid* 'carry something with force (of the wing).' It is not impossible that this final reduplication may be modeled after the pattern set by the forms with infixed *la, li, lo*.

Examples of roots with reduplicated final syllable and inserted *la, li, lo* are:

bulitiktík 'be very full,' from the root *butiktík* 'be replete with,' with infixed *li*.

¹ *salaksák*, p. 276^a, is evidently not related to this root.

halomigmig 'something moist,' 'a small mixture; lukewarm',¹
 from the root *hámig* 'mix some liquid with another thing,'
 with infixed *lo* and reduplicated final syllable.

malanġotnġót from *manġotnġót* 'a kind of tree,' with the same meaning.

There is a small class of roots in Tagalog composed of the group *halo* followed by two identical syllables. This *halo* seems to be a prefix and the two following syllables the ultimate root, e. g., *halo-kipkip* from *kipkip* 'cross one hand or foot across the other.' This prefix *halo* contains perhaps the infix *lo*. It is possible, however, that these words are examples of the same formation as *halomigmig*, in which *hámig* is the root, or are at least modeled after forms of that character. But in no other case does a root composed of *ha* and one of the reduplicated syllables, as, e. g., **hakup*, occur, to which these forms might be referred.

The reduplicated roots having initial *halo* are, viz.:

halobaybáy 'small sardine,' perhaps connected with *baybáy*
 'shore of the sea.'

halobitbit 'an herb thus named.' A connection with *bitbit*
 'raise up something in the hand,' is uncertain.

halokipkip 'fold the arms on the breast,' derived from *kipkip*
 'cross one hand or foot over the over.'

halotakták 'tip (metal) of a lance,' derived from *takták* 'the iron
 which caps a staff,' and *takták* 'weed-hook; a pole with a
 piece of iron at the point.'

halotiktík 'song of the newt, lizard,' probably connected with
tiktík 'song of a certain bird.'

In Tagalog then, just as in Bisayan, a number of words containing the infixes *la, li, lo* are found, the words containing these infixes being treated as roots in the various grammars and dictionaries of Tagalog. In general the particles seem to have little or no force, although in some instances traces of a diminutive meaning are apparent. In conclusion I desire to express my thanks to Dr. F. R. Blake for a number of suggestions and explanations.

¹ This definition is taken from Nigg, *A Tagalog English and Eng. Tagalog Dict.*, Manila, 1904, s.v.